

# MEET YOUR PEER ADVISORS

JUNE 2024



Marshall B.  
KETCHUM UNIVERSITY

Enrollment and Student Services



## WHAT IS A PEER ADVISOR?

Your Peer Advisors are second year students who have been selected for their academic excellence and student leadership. They are trained as your first level of support in transitioning to, and succeeding at MBKU. Peer Advisors provide informal advice from a student perspective about life and learning throughout your time at MBKU.

Though you are assigned a single Peer Advisor, you should take the time to get to know them all as they represent the best of what MBKU offers for students wishing to enhance their personal, professional, and leadership development.

## SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRY



Alexis Yoro



Congratulations and welcome, class of 2028! My name is Lexie. I was born and raised in Ha'i'ku, Maui and graduated from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa in December 2021. In my free time, I enjoy crocheting, rotting along to a good Netflix show, and playing the ukulele.

I am also a cat mom to my fluffy tabby named

Ziggy (my absolute pride and joy). Entering my first year at SCCO was definitely intimidating – in part due to my gap year but mostly since I hadn't been away from Hawai'i for much longer than 2 weeks. There was a long adjustment period, especially to California driving (LOL), but the friends that I've made have made the transition so much easier. I know starting grad school can be so scary but remember to really soak in and enjoy this time with the friends that you make because it goes by so quickly! Remember that there are so many resources at your disposal if you ever need support during your time at SCCO, we are all here to help you out! Enjoy your summer and I look forward to meeting you all in the Fall.



Alice Si



Hi SCCO Class of 2028, congrats on your acceptances and welcome to MBKU!! We are so excited to have you here and look forward to getting to meet you all! My name is Alice, and I'm part of the Class of 2027. I grew up in Monterey Park, CA, and graduated from UC Davis in 2021 with a degree in Neurobiology, Physiology, and

Behavior. I took a few gap years to gain experience working in private practice before starting optometry school last fall. You can usually find

me studying on campus or at local cafes to find the best matcha latte in Fullerton (feel free to ask about my cafe spreadsheet). In my free time, I enjoy exploring OC with my friends, reading mysteries, crocheting, and playing video games! As you approach the start of your time at MBKU, I hope you remember how far you've already come, and take pride in your accomplishments. Grad school may seem daunting at first, and while it is challenging, my first year here has been one of the most fun and rewarding experiences of my life. In optometry school, you won't be alone—you'll have your entire class alongside you, as well as your peer advisors, faculty, and upperclassmen there to support you on the way. If possible, I'd advise making the most of your summer to relax and take time off for yourself—you'll have plenty of time to study later! If you have any questions or worries coming in, feel free to reach out; any peer advisor would be happy to help. Otherwise, have a great summer and we'll see you in the fall!



Brianne Han



Howdy friends!! Welcome to MBKU - we're so happy you're here! My name is Brianne Shishido Han and I am part of SCCO's Class of 2027. I grew up in Anaheim Hills, CA (practically down the street from Ketchum Health) and graduated from CSU Long Beach with a B.S. in Public Health.

Outside of my studies, I can be found wandering the city playing Pokemon GO, quoting Spongebob Squarepants (Seasons 1-5) to my friends ad nauseam, and hanging out with my husband, Harvey, and dog, Remi. My advice to you as you embark on the wonderful journey of optometry school is two-fold: first, never lose sight of why you chose this path in the

first place. It can be easy to get overwhelmed amongst all the studying and extracurriculars - staying connected to the reasons that inspired you to pursue optometry will act as your anchor through all of the ups and downs ahead. Second, remember that your success is not just about the knowledge you gain or the skills you develop; it's also about the support system you cultivate along the way. There is no shortage of wonderful, supportive people at SCCO, so don't hesitate to reach out to your classmates, faculty, and upperclassmen to nurture these relationships. Congratulations again on your admission to SCCO - we'll see you soon!



**Denise Trieu**



Hi!! Welcome to MBKU! My name is Denise and I am a part of SCCO's Class of 2027. I am so excited to be one of your peer advisors for this upcoming year and I look forward to meeting all of you! I grew up in Los Angeles, and graduated from UC San Diego in 2022. My interests include thrifting, trying new restaurants and foods, and traveling. In my free time, I like to go out with friends, watch movies, read, and crochet! A token of advice I hope you will keep in mind is to be open-minded and open-hearted as you enter graduate school. You will meet some of the most brilliant, kind, interesting, and diverse individuals, and I highly suggest that you get to know all of your peers, future colleagues, and faculty, as they will be by your side for the next few years. Get out of your comfort zone and be accepting of new opportunities and experiences! Most importantly, remember to take care of your physical and mental health as optometry school can be intense and challenging. Rest assured, you have the most uplifting and warm community supporting you every step of the way. Don't forget to have fun and make lots of memories in and out of school! Good luck with your first year at MBKU! Please reach out if you have any questions, and say hi if you see me on campus! :)



**Joanna He**



Hi everyone, welcome to MBKU! My name is Joanna. I'm a second-year optometry student at SCCO. I was born and raised in Houston, TX and went to undergrad at the University of Texas at Dallas. I graduated with a B.S. in biology and took a gap year in Houston before moving over to Anaheim in August 2023. When I'm not at school, you can find me hiking, cooking, or playing games with friends. If you're wondering what games I play, my hint is that I'm looking forward to fall this year since Arcane season 2 will be coming out. I also love trying new places to eat and getting boba way too often. My first advice to y'all as a peer advisor is to make the most of this summer! Grad school can get really busy, and it gets a lot harder to keep up with everyone and everything. I would recommend doing whatever those things are that you've been putting off whether it be going on a vacation, catching up with old friends, spending time with your family, getting your car tuned up, or really anything that's been in that "later" bucket until now. Once school starts, there'll be so many new and exciting things for you guys to be a part of, so it definitely helps to be caught up on life before it all begins. If any of you guys need advice on anything from what class is like to what's a good new show to start, you're more than welcome to reach out to chat. Congrats again on this fun new chapter in life and see you guys around!



**Jonathan Kwok**



Congratulations SCCO Class of 2027! My name is Jonathan Kwok and I am part of SCCO's Class of 2027. Being here in SCCO is definitely one of the best decisions I have made and I am confident that the Class of 2028 will also have as much of

a good time as I have had so far! I am from the Bay Area and specifically Daly City if you know where that is, but I was originally born in Hong Kong. I graduated from UC Davis in 2023 majoring in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. I did not take a gap year and was extremely lucky to have gotten into this amazing school. I love wasting time scrolling through food reels on Instagram and also playing mobile games on my phone like Genshin Impact and COD mobile when I am not studying for the next exam. I'm very excited to meet everyone! My advice for the incoming class is to enjoy the time that you'll spend in SCCO! While optometry school is definitely not a walk in the park, it really brings everyone close together as we all struggle through it together and it is especially true here in SCCO. Some of my favorite memories have been eating ice cream late at night after a rough week with friends and also just having a good time practicing for the next proficiency late at night. Don't forget to take breaks, and always believe in yourself. Time will fly by and it seems unreal that I will be a second year by the time Class of 2028 will be reading this!



**Justin Alvarez**



Hey, first years! Congrats and welcome! My name's Justin and I'm a part of SCCO's Class of 2027. I went to UC San Diego for undergrad and graduated with a Physiology and Neuroscience degree. When I'm not doing things school related, you can find me rock climbing, running, playing video games, hanging out with friends or anything else that sounds fun! If anything I mentioned sounds fun to you or you just want to chat, feel free to reach out! :) As for advice: you'll hear it all the time, but graduate school is a marathon, not a sprint. Make sure to take time to focus on your physical, mental, and emotional health, along with your social relationships! Because all of those are what's going to help you persevere through school and make everything worth it in the long run! Enjoy the rest of your summer (try not to think too much about school just yet, there will be plenty of time for that throughout the year) and excited for this upcoming year with you all!



**Kelly Diep**



Congratulations and welcome to MBKU! My name is Kelly Diep and I am a part of the SCCO Class of 2027. I grew up in SoCal and graduated from UC Davis with a degree in Neurobiology, Physiology, and Behavior. I took a gap year before coming to SCCO. Outside of studying, I enjoy going to the gym, exploring new coffee shops, and getting food and drinks with friends. If I'm not studying on campus, you can find me at nearby coffee shops! My best advice is to take advantage of the free time in your first year, especially your fall quarter, and find study methods that work for you. Take time to go out and explore when your schedule is lighter. Transitioning to grad school can be challenging and overwhelming so make sure to take time to destress and maintain a good school-life balance. Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions. I am so excited to see you all in the fall!



**Kendal McCarthy**



WOO!!! Congratulations and welcome to MBKU! My name is Kendal, and I am a second-year optometry student at SCCO!! I grew up in San Clemente, CA, so I am pretty local to the area! I graduated from UCLA in 2022 with a degree in Psychobiology. When I'm not studying or practicing skills, I like to go on hikes/runs, try new restaurants and foods, spend time with family and friends, make new recipes, read, listen to music or podcasts, and watch movies/shows! I also love going to the beach and watching the sunset! My advice to anyone entering graduate school is to practice good time management skills. This will help you in

SO many ways, not just academically. Having good time management allows you to make sure you have time for self-care, family, friends, and also having some fun!! It is super important to have a work-life balance in grad school, and it is definitely still possible no matter what rumors you may have heard! Another huge bit of advice I have for all of you is to make sure to put yourself out there and say "Yes" to opportunities that come your way because you never know what other opportunities they can lead to!! Some of my favorite memories of first-year were literally just going to a TON of school events and learning from and networking with students and practicing ODs. I promise you won't regret it, and as an added bonus, you'll probably get a free meal or two out of all of the different events! It can be a bit challenging adapting to grad school whether you're coming in straight from undergrad or have a few gap years under your belt, but I just know you will love it here at SCCO! You've worked so hard to get here, and the best is yet to come!!! Never hesitate to reach out to me anytime for advice, or if you just want to chat! I'm so happy you're here and SUPER excited for you as you start this new chapter in life. Good luck with your first year in graduate school, you got this!



**Kimi Uenaka**



Hello hello!! Welcome to the MBKU family and CONGRATS on making it to where you are now! I know we haven't met yet, but I'm already so proud of you and I can't wait to meet you all! My name is Kimi and I'll be one of the second-years you'll see around campus! I'm originally from the Bay

Area and I graduated from Chapman University with a major in Applied Human Physiology in 2023. In my free time, I like to go to different coffee/boba shops, crochet, and take naps, and some fun facts about me are that I have an identical twin sister, I love strawberries, and bright light makes me sneeze. When I was preparing for the first quarter of school, I was definitely pretty nervous because there was so much change happening (new school, new friends, new home, etc.) and I know the transition can feel overwhelming. The good news is that everyone else is going through the same thing, and you have a ton of other people who are here to support you! My best advice would be to take a moment to figure out how you want to maintain balance in your life. Whether it's getting involved in volunteering clubs to fulfill your passion for serving the community, scheduling Facetime calls with your family, or taking some time out of your week to do some self-care, I think it's really important to find a good balance and have an idea of how you prioritize activities to spend your time on. There will be tough times during optometry school, but I promise it'll be worth it! Plus, you'll have a whole community here to support you! With that said, hope you enjoy the rest of your summer and I will see you all at Orientation!



**Kristen Yokoyama**



Hi class of 2028! Congratulations and welcome to MBKU! My name is Kristen Yokoyama and I am a part of SCCO's class of 2027. I grew up in Honolulu, Hawaii and graduated from Seattle University with a Biology degree. In my free time I like to explore restaurants and cafes with my

friends, play pickleball, and (attempt) to cook yummy food! My advice for you is to really enjoy every moment of your first year at SCCO. It's going to be challenging, but really fun at the same time. Make friends, explore the area and try to keep a good school/life balance. A misconception I had before I started my first year was that I wouldn't have a lot of free time like I did in undergrad. But as long as you manage your time wisely, there is definitely enough time to do the things you enjoy on the weekends and even during the weekdays as well. I would highly recommend taking time for yourself as often as you can to prevent burning out! Personally, I find that the breaks I take after a good study session or a long day of class are the most rewarding and you feel good about the work you put in throughout the day. I would also take the first two quarters to refine your

study skills and find what methods work best for you so you are prepared for the rest of your time here at SCCO. I know starting optometry school can be a little daunting, but there are so many people who are here to support you so never hesitate to reach out! Again, congratulations and I'm so excited to meet you all!



**Kristie Lin**



Hello Class of 2028! My name is Kristie and I am a part of SCCO's Class of 2027. I grew up in the Bay Area, California and went to UC Berkeley for my degree in Molecular & Cell Biology and Cognitive Science. Optometry school is the first time I have moved away from NorCal, and I love

my experience here so far! Outside of academics, I enjoy being active and spending quality time with friends. You can usually find me swimming, running, snowboarding, or taking yoga classes, but I also love cooking and trying new food spots. Beginning your new chapter in Optometry school is exciting, but can also be nerve-wracking. Don't worry, it's completely normal and all part of the process! Remember, everyone is going through the same thing. School will be tough at times, and can require some adjusting, but my advice to you is to take your time. Take your time to get to know your peers, adapt to the classes, and figure out what works for you. Most importantly, take time to have fun and enjoy the whole experience! If you ever have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out! We as peer advisors are here to support you in your journey. Welcome to SCCO, we are so excited to have you and I can't wait to meet you all :)



**Mahima Masih**



Congratulations Class of 2028, and welcome! My name is Mahima Masih and I'm in the SCCO Class of 2027. I was born in Virginia, and mostly grew up in San Diego. I graduated from Rice University in Houston, Texas with a degree in Sports Medicine and Exercise Physiology in 2022.

I took a gap year after that, and I know starting optometry school can be a little daunting. If you're in the same boat, know that you're not alone! You're entering a community filled with so many types of support. School can feel overwhelming but try to make time for things that make you happy and help you unwind. I'm blessed to have incredible peers and we not only help each other through our academics, but also to enjoy life. In my free time, I spend time with friends, wander Trader Joe's, and I love watching hockey (Dallas! Stars!). You may not always find time for long adventures, but I've found that the little things help bring balance to life. Playing my violin, watching tv with a coffee, and talking to my family helps me relax. Above all else, know that you will be ok. You've worked so hard to get to this point and I am very excited for you and this next part of your journey. You will overcome challenges and experience so much growth together with your classmates. I cannot wait to meet you all and don't hesitate to reach out!



**Nina Khanbijian**



CONGRATULATIONS SCCO INCOMING CLASS OF 2028! You all must be stoked (and a little nervous) to begin your optometry school journey! My name is Nina Khanbijian, a proud part of SCCO class of 2027. I was born here in Southern California and I graduated from CSUF

in 2020 with a psychology major. 3 interesting facts about me: 1) I have been writing a book (almost daily) for over 10 years! 2) I lived in Las Vegas, Nevada for 7 years and once almost got stung by a scorpion that snuck into my house (Yikes!) 3) I was previously a HUGE Exo fan and once coincidentally drove side-by-side to their van (for those who know, I saw Tao in the passenger seat! I literally screamed). My biggest advice for you:

Have your none-negotiables. Optometry school can get very busy, and sometimes you lose sight of what's truly important to you and doing things that make you happy. Keep that one thing that is special to you and always make time for it, even if you feel like you're drowning in schoolwork. Trust me, that might be the only thing to keep you sane! Getting good grades and doing well is important, but if your mental health is compromised you will have a very difficult time. Life is a happy medium. So please keep your priorities in check, in both school and your personal life. I am very excited to meet you all! I hope you all have a wonderful summer and definitely take advantage of the free time you have!



**Sara Kim**



Hello, Class of 2028! Congratulations and welcome to MBKU! My name is Sara Kim and I am a part of the Class of 2027. I was born and raised in Honolulu, Hawai'i and graduated from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa with a degree in Biology. In my free time, I love to play video games

with my friends, golf, crochet, and read. If I'm not doing any of those things, you'll likely find me wandering around campus playing Pokemon Go. In making the transition to graduate school, you may find yourself faced with many new challenges and struggles, but you will also face a lot of new opportunities, experiences, and growth. It is a difficult and nerve-racking process, but you have an entire community of people ready and willing to support you here at MBKU. My advice to you is to take everything one step at a time. It's easy to get overwhelmed during the process, but don't forget to enjoy the present moment and have fun! You will learn so much about yourself and you will come out of the process ready to tackle almost anything graduate school throws at you. For now, enjoy your hard-earned summer break. It will fly by! I can't wait to meet you all soon!



**Stephanie Nguyen**



Welcome to MBKU, Class of 2028! My name is Stephanie, and I am part of SCCO's Class of 2027. I was born and raised in San Diego where I graduated from UC San Diego with a degree in Molecular and Cell Biology in 2022. During the COVID-19 pandemic, my family moved to Houston,

TX but my heart will always remain in California! In my free time, I enjoy cooking, singing, dancing, watching YouTube videos, and going to local parks! As a first-generation student, I am very grateful to further pursue my education at SCCO and be surrounded by the most welcoming community of faculty, upperclassmen, and classmates. In my first year, I've come to realize that some of my studying habits in college were no longer helpful in graduate school. A study technique you utilize for one class might not work as well for another class, so be flexible and try out different methods! The biggest piece of advice I can share with you all though, is to be patient with yourself! We are all capable of achieving our goals, so I believe that failure is just the first step in learning. While it is acceptable to hold ourselves to a high standard, it's equally important to maintain a healthy mindset! Academic burnout is a real thing, and it can easily lead to detrimental effects on your overall health. Remember to invest time in taking care of yourself and do something that you enjoy outside of school at least once every week! Congratulations again, everyone! I am so excited to meet all of you soon!



**Vivian Yim**



Welcome to MBKU Class of 2028! My name is Vivian Yim and I am a part of the SCCO Class of 2027. I was born and raised in San Diego and graduated from University of California, Irvine with a degree in Biology. I took a gap year after

graduating and worked as an optician and a clinical research coordinator. I also traveled to New York and Japan. In my free time, I like to watch Korean dramas, hang out with my dog, try new food/drink spots, and go to music festivals. My advice for your first year is to enjoy your first year! You have much more time than you realize especially as you learn how to be more efficient and prioritize with your schedule. Enjoy hanging out with your peers and everything Southern California has to offer. Another important piece of advice that I still follow is not being too hard on yourself. It is easy to beat yourself down for not doing well on exams or proficiencies, but don't forget to celebrate the little milestones and the progress you have made. Everything can be daunting at first, but SCCO has fostered such a supportive environment with so many resources. Reach out, ask questions, and find your friends who make school much more exciting. Congratulations on being here, I can't wait to meet you guys in the fall.



**Zachary Alba**



Hey, Class of 2028! Congratulations on your acceptance, and Welcome to MBKU! You've worked so hard to get to this point, and we're all so proud of your accomplishments. :) My name is Zachary Alba, and I'm part of the Class of 2027.

A little bit about me, I was born in Long Beach, CA, and grew up in Cerritos, CA. I graduated early from UCR in 2021 with my B.S. in Biology. Afterwards, I took a gap year working as an optometric technician and perfecting my application, whilst spending time with friends and family. During my downtime, I enjoy playing with my dogs, watching new shows/movies, going to concerts, gymming, and taking long drives. My piece of advice to you is to stay confident in your abilities and be courageous. The MBKU community fosters a sense of camaraderie and support between faculty and students conducive to a successful learning environment; it's definitely considered my home away from home. Although I understand starting in a new environment can be frightening, just take a HUGE breath. Take everything one step at a time and remember all the hardships you've already overcome. Furthermore, four years will go by in the blink of an eye, so make it memorable. Meet new people, make new friends, and create new experiences for yourself. Don't be afraid to be vulnerable with others and remember that there will always be someone who has your back. Again, Congratulations, and we can't wait to meet you all next Fall.

## COLLEGE OF PHARMACY



**Alison Ninh**



Welcome to the pharmily, Class of 2028! My name is Alison Ninh, and I am part of the COP Class of 2027. I was born and raised in Camarillo, California and I graduated from CSU Channel Islands. Outside of school, you can find me at Disneyland, exploring new coffee shops, working out, and recently, playing pickle ball! I

also enjoy going to music festivals and spending time with my friends and family. Grad school is no joke, but taking care of yourself is super important, which means looking after your body and mind. Make sure you are getting enough exercise, eating well, and getting plenty of rest. It is essential to take breaks and do things you enjoy, like hanging out with friends or pursuing hobbies. If you're feeling stressed or overwhelmed, don't hesitate to reach out for support from classmates, family, or counseling services. Remember, your well-being matters just as much as your studies, so be kind to yourself and make self-care a priority! Even though pharmacy school can be daunting, one strategy to get through it is to identify your support system of people with whom you can connect during stressful moments. Congratulations, Class of 2028! Looking forward to meeting you all very soon!



Ana Karimi



Congratulations!! Welcome to the MBKU-Pharmily. We are SO excited you're here. You should be incredibly proud of yourselves for all the hard work and dedication you've invested in your professional and academic careers. It has paid off! My name is Ana, the same as the Disney Princess in "Frozen"! I am part of the

College of Pharmacy Class of 2027. I hold an undergraduate degree in Human Biology and a Master's in Biomedical Sciences. When I'm not studying or working, I love to play competitive soccer and hang out with my best friend and dog, Joey Tribbiani. He's the sweetest Jack Russell you'll ever meet! If I'm not doing either of those, you'll find me indulging in my favorite pastime: eating! Pharmacy school will challenge you to new heights and push you to become a better version of yourself. I encourage you to make health and wellness a routine part of your day. Although it takes practice and commitment, forming healthy habits, especially in school, will benefit you in the long run. I'm excited to meet all of you. See you very soon!!



Cassia Charles



Bienvenido! Chào mừng! 欢迎! Welcome to the class of 2028! My name is Cassia Charles and I am a part of the school of pharmacy class of 2027. I was born on the "Nature Island" of the Caribbean-Dominica. My family immigrated to the United States when I was 4 years old. I have lived in New York, Florida and the Virgin

Islands. However, it was in the melting pot borough of Brooklyn that I spent most of my life. I have a BS in Human Development and Family Studies from Cornell University. After I graduated from college I worked at New York Presbyterian Hospital for a number of years. It was there that I was encouraged to obtain a graduate degree and begin a second career. I didn't know that this new chapter would lead me to pharmacy school and a move across the country. I have had to manage looking for housing, a move, making new friends, working and going to school all on my own. It wasn't easy but the snowless winter sure helped! I also have a strong faith, am a sports fan, vegan baker, world traveler, podcast lover (TWIV, Stuff you Should Know etc.) and love historical Chinese dramas! I started learning Chinese (Mandarin) during the pandemic and loved it! Let's talk! I am here for anyone who needs to navigate through their new chapter. Don't be afraid to ask for help and remember to get your rest. There is free tutoring, counseling, and a lot of support. We all want you to succeed. I look forward to meeting all of you guys. Congratulations on your admission! Enjoy your summer because your new life begins this August!



Daniel Oronoz



Hello, Class of 2028! Welcome to Marshall B. Ketchum University College of Pharmacy. Congratulations on making it to pharmacy school!! My name is Daniel Oronoz and I am from Fontana, CA. I received my bachelor's degree at California State University, Fullerton (CSUF) in Biological Sciences. I am a proud

Mexican American. My hobbies outside of school are going to the gym and watching sports (basketball, baseball, football). My favorite sports teams are the Dodgers, Lakers, and Rams. I love to spend time with my fiancé, family, and friends during my spare time. I currently work as an Intern Pharmacist at Kaiser Permanente. Coming into pharmacy school, I had no experience related to pharmacy so I was a bit worried about how that transition would be when I first started. Although it was a little challenging the first month of school, I was able to quickly adapt and balance my work, school, family, and social life. It may seem a bit scary in the beginning, but I can promise you that it is very possible to achieve your goals with all the resources that are provided at MBKU. I will try my very best to make your transition into pharmacy school go as smoothly as possible while also helping you achieve your goals. Once again, congratulations on making this far into your career and I am very excited to meet you all!



Khang Tran



Dear Class of 2028, I have so much to tell you but let's start with welcome to MBKU! I'm your peer advisor Khang Tran, and I cannot wait to meet you all. I realize that it is no easy feat to take your first steps into graduate school; therefore, I want to congratulate you on accomplishing such a daunting task. My journey to MBKU's

College of Pharmacy was long and winding road as I started with an BS in Anthropology at Cal Poly Pomona with a focus on forensics that led me to dental anthropology (on track to become a Doctor of Dental Medicine), however, I finally found my place at MBKU. The faculty, upperclassman, and friends I've met at MBKU have turned this school into a sanctuary of sorts, and I am eager to get you started on this adventure! Brace yourselves Class of 2028 as you are stepping into a realm in which you will be challenged time and time again, but I promise that you will be so happy as your hard work will let you encounter all sorts of amazing individuals, interesting subjects, and promising career paths. My only advice is to be brave! Graduate school is hard but that doesn't mean it can't be fun. Be brave when you tackle an exam. Be brave when you join a club. Be brave when you meet your classmates. Be brave when you unwind and have some fun outside of school. We at MBKU are all here for you, we are cheering you on, and we are ecstatic to see you accomplish every single goal you set for yourself in the next few years. Lastly, you can find me on campus wandering around, scouring the classrooms for people to make conversations. Off campus, you can find me alongside your fellow peer advisors studying hard and playing harder. Never be afraid to approach anyone here at MBKU, be brave because we are all here for you.



Kyle Paradeza



Hello class of 2028, and welcome to MBKU's COP! My name is Kyle Paradeza and I am a member of the COP's Class of 2027. I grew up in Oxnard, CA and graduated from the University of California, San Diego with a Bachelors of Science in Physiology and Neuroscience. I am an immigrant and first generation college student.

I currently work as an Intern Pharmacist at Kaiser Permanente and I was a Pharmacy Technician for 10 years. During my time as a Pharmacy Technician, I had experience in retail pharmacy and at a Pharmacy Benefit Manager as a Prior Authorization Coordinator and Formulary Administration Specialist. I am currently the Vice President of the Future Pharmacist of America and the Historian of the American Association of Psychiatric Pharmacists. Outside of school, I enjoy playing and watching sports, attending live music events and traveling to try new foods and experiences. Pharmacy school can be a huge transition, but I want to remind you that you made it this far for a reason. You have given yourself the opportunity to shape your future and grow professionally. You will learn so much about what it takes to be a pharmacist and you will impact so many lives in a positive way. I will be here to guide you on your journey to overcome obstacles and achieve your goals no matter the circumstance. My biggest advice to you is to prioritize time management and find time for self-care. Stay motivated and use your support system to get through the challenges and triumphs. 4 years sounds like a long time but it's going to fly by. Make the most of your time here; make lifelong friends and memories. Congratulations class of 2028! Welcome to the MBKU family and I'm so excited to meet you all soon!

## SCHOOL OF PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES



Chiraag Khalasi



Hi everyone! I want to congratulate each of you on your acceptance to MBKU and give you a warm welcome to the family. My name is Chiraag Khalasi, and I am part of the SPAS class of 2025. I graduated from UC Santa Cruz in 2014 with a B.S. in Molecular, Cell, and

Developmental Biology, then did a year of post-bac at CSU East Bay. I'm from Sacramento, CA, and this is my first venture down in southern California, and I have been enjoying it quite a bit. I have loved anything and everything about cars since the first Fast and the Furious movie came out. More recently, I got into drifting and have been enjoying track time and shredding tires in my FRS. Besides cars, traveling and eating delicious food are a few of my other passions. I love traveling to different parts of the world and taking in the culture and food. One thing I learned in PA school is that information is going to keep coming at you, and it is important to make sure you take breaks and pace yourself. I know at first it feels like you may not have enough time to study, let alone have fun outside of school, but doing something you enjoy and spending time with family and friends will get you through this journey.



**Crystal Win**



Congratulations and welcome to the MBKU family. My name is Crystal Win and I am a part of the SPAS 2025 cohort. I graduated from Cal State Long Beach with a degree in Kinesiology. I have two cats, Jasper and Topaz, that my family and I rescued. I enjoy hanging out with my family and friends, going to the gym, and doing arts

and crafts. My tip for you is to remember the most important relationship is with yourself. You worked incredibly hard to be where you are, and you deserve every bit of success that comes your way. Remember, it's OKAY if things don't always go according to plan, or if you stumble a bit. I know it sounds cliché, but the journey is just as beautiful as the destination. Don't forget to take a moment to breathe and take time for yourself. Whether it's going on a walk, grabbing dinner with your friends, or Facetiming your parents, prioritizing self-care is key to finding balance during this stressful time. I'm excited to be your peer advisor and guide you through this incredible journey here at MBKU. I know it can feel overwhelming at first- new faces, new campus, and many late-night studying. But you're not alone! No matter what twists and turns come your way, you've got a whole crew by your side. Think of me as your go-to person. Whether you need someone to listen to, celebrate accomplishments with, or just want some coffee recommendations, I'm here. That being said, cheers to new beginnings, lifelong friendships, and the most unforgettable experiences!



**Ella Rasmuson**



Hello new SPAS students! Congratulations and welcome to MBKU! My name is Ella Rasmuson and I'm in the SPAS class of 2025. I am very excited to meet you all soon. A bit about me, I grew up in Northern Colorado and completed my undergrad degree in Integrative Physiology from the University of Colorado Boulder. After

graduation, I gained patient care experience as a medical assistant while living in Denver. Although I miss the mountains and snowboarding (no offense Big Bear), I have loved the sunny days, beach towns, endless coffee shops, and park dates with my pup here in California. My time at MBKU so far has been so rewarding. I have had the opportunity to be a pre-PA mentor, volunteer at community health fairs, and now serve as a peer advisor to you! My advice to you through this next chapter of your life is to keep looking forward. This will be one of the most challenging but rewarding experiences of your life. Understandably, you may find yourself at times feeling burnt out and questioning how to keep moving forward. So celebrate all your little "wins"; celebrate finishing a long day of studying, working out for 20 minutes, making a healthy dinner, passing your exams, and whatever else you accomplish in your days. Give yourself credit for all the hard work you will be putting into this and give yourself grace on the days that feel more difficult. Never lose sight of what comes at the end of this journey, you get to be an amazing PA!!!!



**Hannah Burgess**



Congratulations and Welcome to MBKU! My name is Hannah and I am part of SPAS Class of 2025. I grew up in Northern Utah and graduated from University of Utah in 2021 with a B.S. in Kinesiology and a minor in Pediatric Clinic Research. During this time, I gained experience

in the ER, OR, and family med setting and was in the Air Force Reserve for 6 years. I moved to sunny Southern California last summer to start at MBKU! I love going to the beach, spending time with loved ones, going to concerts, and finding all the best restaurants in town. Now let's talk about you! You are about to begin one of the most challenging yet rewarding journeys of your life. My biggest piece of advice is to have confidence in yourself! I know starting PA school is nerve-wracking but always remember that you were chosen to be here for a reason. The first few months are hectic but eventually you will get into a groove with a solid study group and routine and you will feel more comfortable. Everyone's journey is different so don't compare and don't be afraid to reach out if you ever need help or need someone to talk to. Everyone from classmates to peer advisors to the faculty are supportive and are in your corner to help you succeed and become an amazing clinician. My second piece of advice is to make time for yourself. Just because you are studying a lot does not mean you can't still do things that make you happy. Work hard, trust the process, and celebrate every small win that you can! I am so excited to meet and cheer you all on soon and I am beyond honored to be with you on your PA journey.



**Jacqueline Costan**



Congrats and welcome to MBKU! My name is Jacquie Costan, and I'm a part of the School of PA Studies Class of 2025. I'm originally from Carlsbad, CA and I pursued my undergraduate degree at UC Davis, majoring in Physiology. Before starting PA school, I worked as an ED scribe and Dermatology MA. Beyond academics,

I enjoy staying active, reading, hiking, ceramics, and really anything at the beach! My journey at MBKU has been incredibly rewarding. Since day one, I've felt like part of a tight-knit community that's become my second family. Remember, your passions and hobbies are just as vital as your studies; they can still have a prominent place in your life. Balancing academics with personal pursuits is not just feasible but essential for your well-being. While sacrifices may be inevitable, never compromise on taking care of yourself and spending time with loved ones! PA school is demanding, but it doesn't have to consume every aspect of your life. As you eagerly await the start of the Fall quarter, I encourage you to spend quality time with family and friends. I'm beyond excited for the incredible journey that lies ahead for you. Cherish this time and know that you have a supportive community here at MBKU that will be cheering you on every step of the way. Welcome to the family!



**Kristen Mueller**



Congratulations & welcome to MBKU!! My name is Kristen and I am a part of the School of PA Studies, Class of 2025. I grew up in Arcadia, CA and spent 4 years in Waco, TX attending Baylor University -- Sic 'em bears! I graduated with a major in Health Science Studies and a minor in Biology and made my way back to California (as

a SoCal girl does). I worked in oncology as a scribe and clinical research coordinator for four years before starting PA school, and absolutely loved learning and working with such a special patient population. My perfect day includes a slow morning with coffee, a book, and a beach walk. I'm always planning either a trip or a party, (I'm the social chair for our class, not shockingly) so I would love to swap pics of both! You have SO much to be proud of and to look forward to as you start your PA journey. PA school is both exciting and terrifying, both exhilarating and exhausting, both challenging and rewarding. It is all of these things and more. Allow yourself time and space to feel everything you are feeling. You will evolve in every way throughout the next 27 months - embrace it and ride the wave. Our MBKU family and faculty are wonderful, and you have so many people (including me!) that are on your team and cheering you on. You could not have picked a better place to pursue your dreams and I cannot wait to be a part of it! See you soon :)